

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
Support Building
Juneau, Alaska

C. L. Anderson, Commissioner

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PETERSON LAKE STOCKED WITH STEELHEAD TROUT

The stocking of Peterson Lake and stream system near Tee Harbor with 20,000 steelhead trout was announced today by Alex McRea, Director, Sport Fish Division of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Previous to this planting, the Department rehabilitated the Lake by eradicating its indigenous population of stunted Dolly Vardens. Rotenone, a derivative of the South American derris root, toxic to fish, was used to remove the undesirable fish.

Steelhead trout were chosen for planting Peterson Lake with an expectation of establishing a sea-run population of this highly desirable game fish in the Juneau area. The steelhead used in this stocking were obtained as eggs from a remote Southeastern Alaska lake and stream system. The eggs were hatched and the fry raised to planting size in the Territorial Sportsmen's Hatchery at Auke Bay.

Departmental biologist, Roger Wadman of the Sport Fish Division, airlifted the fish to Peterson Lake in plastic bags. After each bag was filled with a measured amount of water, to which the young steelheads were added, pure oxygen was forced into the bag to replace the natural air. The bag was then sealed. Fish under the crowded conditions that are encountered in transporting for stocking, soon use up the dissolved oxygen in the water and die. The pure oxygen present in each air-tight bag is absorbed by the water and insured the safe arrival of the steelhead at Peterson Lake.

The young steelhead are expected to spend an average of two years in the Lake to obtain their initial growth. At the end of this period, they will migrate down Peterson Creek to salt water if they follow a normal migratory pattern. After a year and a half in the ocean, they will start returning in the fall to spawn. During the spawning run, these fish will be available to sport fishing in the stream. Unlike the salmon, the steelhead may spawn several times.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game will continue to stock Peterson Lake for the next three years to evaluate the experiment and then each succeeding year if the steelhead plants prove successful.

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